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**THE MAINE SENATE**  
131st Legislature

**Testimony of Senator Richard A. Bennett**

Presenting LD 1450, "An Act to Fund the Recommendations of the Mountain Division Rail Use Advisory Council"  
May 18, 2023

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and esteemed members of the Transportation Committee: I am Senator Rick Bennett of Oxford, and I have the honor of serving 14 communities in Western Maine in the State Senate. I am pleased to sponsor LD 1450, "An Act to Fund the Recommendations of the Mountain Division Rail Use Advisory Council."

As I explained in my earlier testimony, LD 1450 would provide funding to implement the recommendations of the Mountain Rail Use Advisory Council. The way this bill is written it would provide a one-time \$18 million general fund appropriation for the replacement of the tracks on the 28 miles of the rail corridor between the towns of Fryeburg and Standish. The \$18 million figure is the estimate provided by the consultant to the Mountain Division Rail Use Advisory Commission.

I am offering a simple amendment to the bill as written. Instead of "28 miles of the rail corridor," it should read "31 miles of the rail corridor."

I would like to see this amended bill supported by the committee and go to the Appropriations Table where it can stay pending any further funding options, probably into next year's regular session. It is important to note that this fiscal note is only an estimate. The actual number will depend on the engineering and feasibility and whatever may be available as a funding source, including private contributions. Further, I do not expect that this entire amount will ultimately appropriated through this bill, but it is critical to have a vehicle through which funding can be appropriated.

Thank you for your consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions.